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ABSTRACT

Art English is a combination of English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL)/English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) and art content. As a new instructional area, it faces several challenges: as with all English for Special Purposes (ESP), exchange of information among programs; development of a suitable combination of art content and ESL, due to lack of textbooks; and lack of a curriculum model due to the unique demands of art curriculum and student needs. For the art student, course work includes both art studio and liberal arts requirements. Unlike many other disciplines, art classes may not require high English proficiency. Art English at the Temple University (Pennsylvania) Intensive English Language Program is a pre-course for an undergraduate arts requirement. The 7-week course has four components: (1) an art language/binder workshop in which students develop facility in talking about art and write 30 essays; (2) lecture listening and notetaking activities with sections on the materials of painting, sculpture, and architecture; (3) critical reading activities in Renaissance art; and (4) a study tour of art and architecture in the Philadelphia region. Such courses allow art schools to enroll foreign students in greater numbers and create a more dynamic international environment for art education and discussion. (MSE)

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Art English

Robert Preece

Over the past few years, ESL programs have sprouted up at art and design schools in the United States and Japan; most notably at the Kanazawa International Design Institute—an affiliate of the Parsons School of Design in New York, the School of Visual Arts in New York, and the Rhode Island School of Design. Due to art schools' relative isolation from universities at large, ESL programs have specialized their curricula to serve the needs of the art student. These programs lend themselves to further development and indicate the emergence of a new era in EAP, which I call Art English.

Art English is a combination of ESL/EFL and art content. As a new area, Art English has several challenges: (1) along with the entire ESP field, the exchange of information among programs; (2) the development of a suitable combination of art content and ESL in an ESP framework, for at present there are no Art English textbooks, and (3) due to the unique demands of art curriculum and the needs of its students, the lack of an Art English curriculum model.

For the art student, course work includes a combination of art studio and liberal arts requirements. Unlike many other disciplines, classes for the art student often do not require a high level of English proficiency. Studio classes are not language-demanding, as these classes focus on art production with its inherent context-embedded visual language. This allows for the art student to take studio classes at a lower language level than that required for other disciplines. Most often, liberal arts requirements can be taken at a later date.

As an advanced-level content elective, Art English at Temple University's Intensive English Language Program (IELP) serves as a precourse for an undergraduate arts requirement. At the same time, it provides foreign students with a rewarding study abroad experience in the United States. The seven-week course is made up of four components: art language/binder workshop; lecture-listening/notetaking; critical reading, and a study tour component in the European-study-abroad tradition. We train the student to develop the confidence and competence to master the skills required for the art analytical process.

For the first component, I present a 15-minute lecture using slides followed by a seminar activity in which students analyze random works of art with the aid of a prompt sheet. In the process, they develop fluency and accuracy in talking about works of art. The context continually changes allowing the student to

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acquire the language and visual skills necessary to master the course. During seminars, students take notes and use them to write their essays. With these essays, thirty in all, the students create a binder arranged in chronological order which additionally lays the foundation for an understanding of the history of art. The second component deals with lecture listening/notetaking activities with sections on the materials of painting, sculpture, and architecture. The third component is comprised of critical reading activities dealing with Renaissance art, perhaps the most important period in art for understanding the Western tradition. With the aid of an art historiographical category sheet, students pull apart paragraphs and classify sentences and paragraphs.

Students leave the classroom to analyze significant works of art and architecture in Philadelphia in the fourth component, modeled after art history classes at the Tyler School of Art in Rome. Study tours include looking at paintings at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, outdoor sculpture and public space around Philadelphia's City Hall, and Colonial and Neo-classical architecture in historic Philadelphia. Students compare and contrast various works and incorporate their analyses into their binders.

The implications of Art English are staggering. Art English allows art and design schools to accept international students in greater numbers and to create a more dynamic international environment where artists from a variety of cultures come together to not only produce art, but to talk about it in detail. While art is a visual language, the common verbal language, English, provides a greater opportunity for the exchange of ideas. ESL art students can now find out in greater detail the thoughts behind the image within its cultural context.

In fact, we can anticipate that the new ESP field, Art English, will further the synthesis of an international art product for art of the 21st century.

Robert Preece is Art English Instructor at Temple University's Intensive English Language Program in Philadelphia. He recently completed a Master's degree in TESOL with a concentration in Art English and has a B.A. in Art History from Temple University. He has taught ESL in Korea and studied at the Tyler School of Art in Rome.

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